

Karen Burn: The following oral history interview was conducted by Karen Burn of the National Park Service, and Chief David Jarvis of the Naval Historical Center for the National Park Service, USS Arizona Memorial, at the Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu, on December 6, 2001, at 11:40 a.m. The person being interviewed is Raymond Van Heuklon, who was a private first class of the 19th Infantry, 3rd Battalion Headquarters on December 7th, 1941. For the record, please state your full name, place of birth, and birth date.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Raymond O. Van Heuklon, uh.. eight- eighty-one years old. I was born in Appleton, Wisconsin.

Karen Burn: And in 1941, what did you consider your hometown?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Appleton, Wisconsin.

Karen Burn: And what were your parents' names?

Raymond Van Heuklon: William and Estelle Van Heuklon.

Karen Burn: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Only one sister.

Karen Burn: Where did you go to high school?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Two years at Appleton.

Karen Burn: And where and why did you enlist?

Raymond Van Heuklon: I guess I wanted to see the world or something. <chuckles> I just wanted to-- and I- I also figured that they were talking about drafting, so I figured I'd get in ahead of 'em and get trained and help train somebody else. So...

Karen Burn: And what year was this?

Raymond Van Heuklon: 1940.

Karen Burn: 1940.

Raymond Van Heuklon: October of 1940.

Karen Burn: October of 1940. And the place that you enlisted?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Appleton.

Karen Burn: In your hometown.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. And then went to-- uh.. they had a recruiting office in Appleton and I went to Milwaukee for the final. And I wound up uh... in uh... foreign service, which- which- what it was at that time, it was- it was still a territory. So it qualified for foreign service. And I had my choice between here and uh.. Puerto Rico. I figured as long as I'm going, I might as well get as far from home as I can. <laughs> Uh.. that's how I wound up here. Christmas Eve, 1940, landed on uh.. docks on Honolulu there. From there, up in the pyramidal tents in uh... Coco Pass, the firing range up there. We- we were quarantined for two weeks. Then we went back and joined our companies.

Karen Burn: So let's back up for just a minute. After you enlisted in Wisconsin, how- how did you make your way out through Hawaii? You- you went through your basic training?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Well, at that time, everybody east of the Mississippi went to uh.. either Fort Slocum or in, I think it was Charleston or something. There was another post there, a port there. And we- and we went by train to uh.. Fort Slocum. And uh.. while we were there, they opened up the garage, they were having so many people. So I- I- I was sent down to New Rochelle. And- and when the boat was ready to go, we went by boat down the East River and boarded uh.. the USS Republic and went through the Panama Canal. We were each al- allowed leave on each side of the canal. Back up to

Frisco and laid over there for a week. And then we went on to H- Hawaiian Islands.

Karen Burn: And you arrived here around Christmas of 1940?

Raymond Van Heuklon: On- on Christmas Eve, yeah.

Karen Burn: Christmas Eve of 1940 you arrived in Hawaii.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah.

Karen Burn: Now, had any of your hometown friends, were they with you? Had they enlisted with you?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No.

Karen Burn: No. So you were by yourself.

Raymond Van Heuklon: One did, but uh.. he had medical problems and he had to go home and to uh... he had a certain time after the post-operation. So they wouldn't take him now. But he was all right when he healed up. So- so he went home, and he wound up in the Red Arrow Division in the National Guard. Uh... And after we finished-- after we were allowed back to our barracks, then we went through six weeks of basic- basic training in our- in the 19th Infantry.

Karen Burn: So when you arrived in Hawaii, if you- if you would just tell us a little about your rank and what your duties were for the first few months that you spent here in Hawaii.

Raymond Van Heuklon: I- I- I was just a 21-dollar private, yard bird.
<chuckles> So.

Karen Burn: And what- what were some of your typical daily duties at the time?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Learning to be a soldier. For- for six weeks, I w- was in basic training.

Karen Burn: And once you got out?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Once I got out, and then we went back to our- the units we were assigned to. And uh.. I was in the 3rd Battalion, and I wound up uh.. right guard in a marching unit for _____ uh... recruits. And that's when I got back to my- my company a few days, I- I was transferred into the headquarters detachment as a truck driver, because I had truck driving experience. And then I was- was- went uh.. chau- chauffeur for the uh... the Battalion commander. And I was- that's what I was doing until uh.. after the seventh. And they had a mass transfer for uh.. in all the units for the radar outfit. They uh.. they only had two stations on the island at that time, and they ran- operated four hours a day. And uh.. the government and plus the other people were pushing, they wouldn't let- let them put an- a radar antenna up anyplace. So and then they start-- I was assigned to uh.. the one at uh.. I guess they call it Opana now. But I- it was just Kahuku Point when I was there. And I was there-- I- I got there just before Lockhart [ph?] was shipped back to the states. He's one of them that picked it. And uh.. Elliot was still there yet, and I met him. Worked with him for probably a month or so before they sent him back. And then from there, I started sh- shipping around. When I- I left there, I went to uh.. Christmas Island, worked the station there about six months. Then I came back, went to the University of Hawaii for radar technician. And then` from there to Pearl Harbor Radar School. And then I- then I was assigned, oh, from there, I think it was Coco- Coco Head. That- that's the one I was just talking about later that took the cable car down on there. And- and when they turned the lights back on in- in Honolulu, I had to take a ride on that cable car to see it. It was a beautiful sight. <sigh> And from there I went to uh... Kawai. And I was there till what? For about six, eight months. Then they relieved the whole uh.. unit and uh.. brought us back. They were gonna let us come home on furlough. But by the time we were out of the camp, they cha- changed it to permanent, if we wanted to. So. And I came back and was in the 4th Air Force uh.. at uh.. Lompoc.

Karen Burn: When you were at the Opana Radar Station, do you-- it was fairly new, wasn't it?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. It was- it was uh.. the-- when I got there, it was a mobile unit, just like the picture up there on the- on the poster. That was it. Uh... while I was there, they put in a 100-foot tower, and put the antenna on that. The other one is just set- set out on a uh... trailer, to a trailer and had a tractor to pull it around. It was two- two vans with operating. One had the power supply and the other one had uh.. the operation, the scope _____ . And then we had a uh.. a _____ for accurateness of _____ equipment. That was all one unit. And so they dismantled that, after they had uh.. the- the 100-foot tower on it. And I had to do- do the tune up on it and get it- get it working. Somewhere down there, we had a- we had built a camp uh.. with these uh.. temporary barracks. But before that, we were staying in a pineapple camp that was up over the ridge. I don't know if you're familiar with? It's was that still there yet? I think it was Dole. They- they bring their crew out there for a week or- or till they had uh.. that field, that area harvested. And we took over that camp. And I think there was what? Eight or ten buildings. Rough- rough sawed lumber and uh.. and probably a central mess and thing [ph?]. We were in there until we got the new barracks set up. And that was right on the beach down there. Now everything has changed around. <laughs> At that time the- the road went-- you c- you could see the "B" as you come around that part- area. And uh.. there was a row of cottages along between uh.. between uh.. there was a service road back in there too. And we were just across the service road. We could go between the cottages and get- go swimming in the- the bay there. I did quite a bit of that, and didn't do any since I left. <laughs>

Karen Burn: When you were at Opana, what was the general thought about the radar at that time? Did people have confidence in it?

Raymond Van Heuklon: They did after the seventh.

Karen Burn: After the seventh they did?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. They uh.. well, I was in the Infantry, and uhm.. chauffeur to the Battalion commander. And I wanted a-- I had heard about the radar outfit and I wanted to transfer in it. But in order to do that, the major had to sign the transfer and the application. And I was his chauffeur, so the transfer never went through.

Karen Burn: Oh.

Raymond Van Heuklon: And uh.. then after uh.. this happened, and they assessed everybody, uh.. the paperwork came out that-- in the clerk. I was gone with the major that day. Uh.. every day we were out scouting around. And uh.. he- he come over and talked to me after we got back. And he said-- he told me what the deal was. And he says, "If you want-- you still want it," he says, "I'll put your name on it, but I won't turn it in until you guys leave tomorrow morning." Uhm.. when we came back, the major was a little riled up. And he called all of the Hawaiian department that had gone. There was no turning around. So I finally got in what- got what I wanted.

Karen Burn: Okay.

Raymond Van Heuklon: And I got the training, and I wound up with uh.... chief maintenance man in the station.

Karen Burn: Okay. So by November or early December of 1941, where- where were you at that point? Where- where was your duty station by then?

Raymond Van Heuklon: It was on the way over to the islands. And it was just, like I say, in- in uh.. New York. I laid there, over- over there for, I don't know, it seemed like a month. And then uh.. with- it was a three-week- a three-week uh... ship ride down through the canal and then laying over, went <inaudible> and over the islands. So I don't-- I think it was-- well, it was Christmas Eve.

Karen Burn: Right.

Raymond Van Heuklon: So I went in in November, and all that time I was in the seats just waiting for transportation or riding the boat.

Karen Burn: But the next year, 1941, just- just before the attack on December 7th, where were you at that time in the islands?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Schofield Barracks, with the 19th Infantry.

Karen Burn: You were at Schofield Barracks. All right.

Raymond Van Heuklon: That's- that's where uh.. they saw the plan go over.

Karen Burn: And would you tell us just a little bit about your routine duties at that point when you were there?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Uh.. I was chauffeur. And every day, we'd go out in the north of the island. And he was-- we had a company working there, every-- it'd rotate. And uh.. he- he was in charge of that particular area. So we uh.. located all the gun positions, where he wanted them. And he had a crew working. They- by hand, they leveled the road up so that you could move a little faster. There was nothing but dirt trails. But uh.. they were out there with hand- hand uh.. mattocks and shovels and rakes, straightening it all out so- so we could get up there in a hurry. And that's- that's where we went after the seventh, we went up to that area. But that was my job, just drive the major, and- and every working day was a dr- a drive up there. So.

Karen Burn: So as a chauffeur, you became very familiar with the different military installations on the island?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah.

Karen Burn: Yes. Do you remember what you were doing on the night of December 6th?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. I was at a- a party on a- a beach party.

Karen Burn: A beach party?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. <chuckles> A friend of mine in the 27th Infantry, he was from Milwaukee. And we'd get together every once in a while on- and their- their company was having a beach party on the other side, up beyond Kahuku yet, back down the other side. And so he- he called me. And I- I- I went along with them on it. So I- I had a-- came back-- it was getting pretty cold by uh.. eight, nine o'clock, so we- he- they headed back. And we were- the two of us were gonna sleep on the beach and then uh.. because we- we-- at that time, we were-- you didn't have to get a pass to go to town.

So, we were gonna just bum around the-- for the- for a Sunday. But a good thing we didn't.

Karen Burn: So the cold weather spoiled your sleep on the beach and you went back to the barracks?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. Yeah we-- hey, we had walked probably a half hour up the beach. And uh.. it was getting pretty cold, so we decided to go back.

Karen Burn: So you went back to the barracks?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No, I went back to the truck and then they-- uh.. and I- I was sleeping. I still had my full field pack rolled, because we were on alert for two weeks before that. And- and then he called it off on uh.. let me think of it. They called it off on-- that was Sunday morning, so they called it off at Sun-- uh.. Saturday at noon.

Karen Burn: They had called off the alert the sixth at noon?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Called the aler- yeah. And uh.. we- we still had uh.. patrols for the utilities and the- and the patrol for A Company was- was just came in for breakfast. And somebody ran out and told them about it. And they had a 30-caliber machine gun mounted on the pickup. And uh.. they grabbed the-- took the gun off the tripod and the sergeant ran up through a crawl hole. And the- the barracks were three stories high, and there was scuttle hole on the third floor. And he reached down to get the machine gun, and he heard this plane, and he fired from the hip, and they got him. And that's the one that just missed me when I was coming on the barracks on the far side of the quadrangle.

Karen Burn: So just to back up for a moment. Were- were you actually awakened on the morning of the seventh by the attack in progress?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Well, we didn't hear anything from- an- anything from the- the attack itself. Uh.. th- they were- they were busy with uh... military ins- uh.. installations. And the foot soldier, they wouldn't worry about. So they were--

Karen Burn: Right. So you received word that the attack was in progress.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah.

Karen Burn: And you got up at that point, and what did you do?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Uhm.. that's when the alert was sounded and we had to uh... had a full field pack, like I say, mine was all rolled. So I was done a little bit earlier. And I w- was supposed to open the supply room and give the guy some ammunition. The coo- the- the cook was firing at that plane that- that I saw. You know, up there in a white apron firing a rifle at it.
<chuckles>

Karen Burn: So do you remember at what- what time the plane appeared? This was the Japanese plane?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Gee, I don't remember it.

Karen Burn: Don't remember the time. Do you remember what kind of plane it was?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. It was one of them uh.. what do they call 'em? Zeros?

Karen Burn: One of the Zeros?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. Big red s-- I remember the big red spot on the wing. <chuckles> And the big white eyes of the pilot. That's really about all I seen being right there. I was so surprised. And for a long time, I couldn't figure out why the guy's eyes was so white. And finally, it dawned on me that he was already dead. The pilot was dead when he went over there. They got him on the other side of the quadrangle.

Karen Burn: So by the time he got over the building where you were, he was crashing?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Uh.. he had just missed our barracks.

Karen Burn: He just missed your barracks.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. But he- he was on his way down. And I don't know he- he banked around, but it was, from where I seen him, w- w- was only straight across, and he was going this way. So he had to make a u-turn in order to get over there. So I _____ that the plane was flying itself.

Karen Burn: So there was only one plane?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Only one plane that I seen. And he was a stray from Wheeler Field. Because they were after the uh.. the aircraft. Uh..

Karen Burn: And did you see it actually crash?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No.

Karen Burn: You didn't.

Raymond Van Heuklon: No. I he- heard later on that it had crashed and uh... we couldn't-- we were on alert, so we had to stay put in our barracks until we got orders. But uh.. some of us did go into the hospital barracks, where they had uh.. hauled the bodies from Wheeler Field in there and- and spread 'em all out. And there must have been 200 foot on them Barracks and had a roll on each side. And they- they wanted people to go through and see if they could identify any of 'em.

Karen Burn: They- they were bringing over the dead from Wheeler?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. See, our- our- our barracks were right next side to- or right next to the uh... base hospital. But on the far corner, they had uh... wood barracks for an emergency. And the- the wards that they weren't using. And that's where they put 'em, so...

Karen Burn: Do you rememb-- was- were there- were there lots off dead being brought from Wheeler?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Mm-hm. I don't know, how many can you get in about a 200-foot building? <chuckles> They- they were side by side all the way down on both sides of the main aisle. And I don't know as that they probably were- weren't done yet when- when we went in through it.

Karen Burn: So you had to go through to see if you could identify any of them.

Raymond Van Heuklon: We didn't have to.

Karen Burn: But you did.

Raymond Van Heuklon: But they were asking people to do that. And uh.. we did do it. We'd take turns and have somebody close by so that they could holler when it- when we were ready to move.

Karen Burn: Did you see anybody that you knew?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No.

Karen Burn: No.

Raymond Van Heuklon: No, it was- it was getting a little later in the afternoon and uh.. starting to get dark a little bit. They were- they were mangled up. Jesus, it was hard to tell.

Karen Burn: And were they also bringing wounded from Wheeler to your hospital?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah, that's what-- that's-- these-- that's what these people-- I imagine they were going into the regular ward. But Wheeler was just probably a mile from Schofield.

Karen Burn: Right. Over the course of the day, did you assist any in the hospital with the wounded?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No, we--

Karen Burn: No?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No, we couldn't go any place, but just sit and wait.

Karen Burn: So when you next received orders, what- what were your next orders to do?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Mm, jump on a truck and go where they were taking us. <chuckles> And that's where we took us up onto these positions that we were uh.. weren't actually in the-- we didn't occupy the positions yet, but we were in the woods close by. There's a plantation up there on-- I don't know, it's some- some kind of wood we were growing for something. Looks like, you know, firewood or pulp wood or something.

Karen Burn: So when you- when you went to the plantation, what were you doing when you arrived there?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Oh I-- uh.. no, that's right. I wasn't driving. I-- then the fellow that was running the supply wasn't going anyplace. So he took his job back again. And that's when I went to work- drive for the-- and then I- I went back to driving for the major. Because they had already assigned somebody else when they advanced me to the uh.. supply room. So when we--

Karen Burn: So- so after the attack you went back to-- later, you did go back to driving.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Mm-hm.

Karen Burn: But when they- when they took you up to the plantation, what were you actually doing up there?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Just sitting. We had our kitchen set up and uh.. no nothing, no pup tents or anything until dark. So we was just sitting there waiting.

Karen Burn: Was this- was this in preparation if there was going to be a land invasion?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. Yeah.

Karen Burn: You were just defensive?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. They-- w- we had positions all over the island. We were- we were ready for a landing.

Karen Burn: So over the course of the day, you never really had the opportunity to see Battleship Row?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No.

Karen Burn: You didn't?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No, I didn't- didn't see that until about two years later. And a friend of mine uh.. worked at uh.. as a rigger on uh.. raising the Oklahoma and the Arizona. And I- I stopped out there once and rode into town with them, because I was going to school at Pearl Harbor. And uh.. I stopped out there and he took-- he-- I was on the uh.. Arizona, and the Oklahoma was righted at that time. And they were just rigging cables to try to- trying to raise the uh.. Arizona. But they were- they were begin- beginning to have doubts though even. There's a rock ledge down there, and as they rolled the ship over it, the deck kept hitting that. Where the Oklahoma, that just slid in the mud and it slid it right around.

Karen Burn: So how many days? Do you remember how many days you stayed up at the plantation?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No. It must have been two, three weeks. I know uh.. I- I- I went into town once. Hitchhiked from out there and in- into

Honolulu. So there- it was more or less-- everything was normal but uh.. you were sleeping in foxholes instead of a be- bunks.

Karen Burn: Do you remember what the general atmosphere was like in the first couple of days after the attack? Was- was there- were there lots of rumors circulating?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. We didn't really know what was going on. I know they were pretty tricky-- uh.. trigger happy, and we had to take one round out of the rifles. A guy says "Halt" and squeeze the trigger at the same time. <chuckles>

Karen Burn: And later, after you left the plantation, it was- it was after that point that you later went back to the barracks? And did you- did you see where the crash was? Or did you never get a chance?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No. We- we never went- went back to the barracks.

Karen Burn: You never went back to the barracks?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No.

Karen Burn: Oh.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Uh.. I- I was _____ with regimental photographers, I was using my own camera. I went back to pick some stuff up that I had left in there. We- we were setting up uh... a photo shop, selling supplies and that. And they- we had a deal where they furnished the room, we did- did all the regimental photography, covering all their sports. And they let us run a shop out of this little room. We were told that we were going to develop pictures in- in our spare time.

Karen Burn: So over the next several weeks after the seventh, you- you left the plantation at least once. What- what other damage did you see from the attack, any?

Raymond Van Heuklon: I don't think so. Only on Pearl Harbor when uh.. because it really wasn't-- it was uh.. scattered around the islands there. And-- and-- by the way, in thinking uh.. it was probably '43, there was a lone plane came in. And uh.. I was on the- the slope at the time. And they called and told us to- to search one particular area. And we picked up a plane about 145 miles. Followed him into the island and then I had him probably 135, 140 miles out the other side. And I didn't know what it was until the next morning, when uh.. they told me it was a _____ plane and that they had dropped bombs up in the mountains. And with no alert call, nothing. And I never heard anything about- about that after that.

Karen Burn: <Inaudible>

Raymond Van Heuklon: But they figured if they called an alert, you know, they could tell from the s- slopes that it was only maybe one or two planes. And if somebody struck a match, well, the guys knew where they were. They knew where to drop the bombs. So this way, they let 'em sleep. And they wound up, it was quite a ways up the mountain. So above uh.. between Pearl Harbor and Honolulu, somewhere in that area.

Karen Burn: After the seventh, you- you never had the opportunity to go to Wheeler Field?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No.

Karen Burn: No? You didn't go over there?

Raymond Van Heuklon: That's a little too far to walk. And uh.. you know, if you were- you were going to town, you were on a- a truck, and you couldn't get off there. <laughs> So we just-- I suppose if I had- had known somebody over there, it- it wasn't that- that far of a walk. I never had any reason to go over there.

Karen Burn: While we're still talking about the- the actual attack, is there anything else about the attack you want to add right now? About December 7th or the days right after?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No, as far as I was concerned, there wasn't much happened at all. <inaudible>

Karen Burn: You were pretty isolated.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah.

Karen Burn: On the plantation, right?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah, we were up there at the-- uh.. Schofield is kinda- it's kinda- kinda by itself and going _____. But there- there was- wasn't much of anything there. They did have an ice rink though. They flooded-- it was a- oh, it was only about oh, 20 by 30, something like that. And it was uh.. the ice was only about a half inch thick on it. So I had imagined they had to keep making ice while-- in the- in the weather here. And it was just in a tent or something. I tried it once with it. I couldn't do anything, because the ice was so thin, all you do is just skate forward. You start digging it up, and they'd be on your neck.

Karen Burn: So after Pearl Harbor, how- how much longer did you stay in the military?

Raymond Van Heuklon: I was in until uh.. let's see, when was it? It was September, I think it was. And it was just-- it was after the war.

Karen Burn: So it was September of '45, is that when you got out?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah, mm-hm.

Karen Burn: And- and what did you do for the rest of your time in the military?

Raymond Van Heuklon: I was a-- in my MOS, 953, it w- it was frozen. And the rest of them were getting out several months before uh.. they opened up and let us out.

Karen Burn: So did you- did you stay in the islands for most of that time?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No. I w- was on uh.. 4th Air Force California.

Karen Burn: Oh, you went back to California?

Raymond Van Heuklon: I went back to- I went back and it was-- our headquarters was in Hollywood. And our plotting board was dug in the mountain up there. And the stations all up the coast, uh.. I don't know, it must have been a half a dozen of them. I only know of the- knew of the one that-- well, there was actually two of them. Uh.. there was a newer one. The type I was working on was at Point Arguello, and the- and they had one, uh.. a newer one at uh.. Point Conception, which was just on standby, in a little--

<break in audio>

<new tape begins>

Karen Burn: He went to California. Did he come back to Hawaii?

Chief David Jarvis: I think so.

Karen Burn: He came back to Hawaii. And then can you determine when he got out of the service?

Chief David Jarvis: It was September, '45.

Karen Burn: September of '45. So he spent the rest of the time in the islands.

Chief David Jarvis: Yes.

Karen Burn: Doing radar?

Chief David Jarvis: Yes.

Karen Burn: All right.

Chief David Jarvis: If I got it right you went to California and then you went back to Hawaii?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No, I didn't go back to Hawaii.

Chief David Jarvis: Oh, you never went-- oh, okay.

Raymond Van Heuklon: They-- it-- what started out to be a furlough, they kept changing things. And before we got uh.. shipped out to go on our furloughs from uh... I don't know, it was someplace on-- around the southern part of the island here. And uh.. while- while we were at this holding camp, it was just tents, and-- we-- th- they had frozen uh.. my MOS number. And then while I was there, they changed it, changed the order. Said we could-- we didn't have to g- go on furlough, we could stay in the states then. Because they- or-- if I had of stayed over here, I'd have been on the next batch going down-- they were- they were sending- sending a unit with the invasion of all these islands. They were make-- they were sending units over from uh... of, well, somewhere in Florida. They were training a whole- whole unit. You know, and the- just like the- him in that picture up there. Maybe they was a little <inaudible>. But these guys would come over, full-- they could set up their station anyplace and go to work. But that isn't what was happening. They were sending them over here and then they broke the units up and were put in my outfit. And I had-- my rating was supposed to be a tech sergeant. And I had it for three or four years. And these guys were- they'd leave uh.. the school in- in Florida, they'd come over there. And on the way over, they were advanced. And when they got over there, their deal was full. And us guys over there couldn't- couldn't get a rating. And then- then they put the units back together as they needed 'em and sent 'em back down. But they were coming over faster than we could send them-- we were needed down south. So I- I- I was uh.. in grade longer than a lot of them guys had service in. In fact, I came up once and-- I came over in a boat with the first sergeant. And uh.. he said-- they were talking about me. And the first sergeant said, "Well, I had more time than these- these guys got in the service, more time and rank." I just stayed at that level. But we were starting to send them units down south, but then it wasn't fast enough to _____ the men. But our- our outfit was j- just-- they put people for six months on the station and- and you'd come back and uh.. wow, you're in the-- and then you would go someplace else.

Karen Burn: So you chose not- not to come back to Hawaii because you didn't want to go where the action was, so you stayed.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Not necessarily. I had- I had over four years in. And uh.. and never had a uh.. furlough or anything.

Karen Burn: Right.

Raymond Van Heuklon: And uh.. when it came up with furloughs, why, that's what I uh.. And then it seemed as though we- we didn't have any choices. They just shipped the whole works back to the states. And we were actually waiting for assignment in one of these portable units to go down.

Chief David Jarvis: So your furlough, when you left Hawaii, you took all your belongings with you.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah, mm-hm.

Chief David Jarvis: Okay. And then they saw that they needed your critical need, that your critical skills. And so you took the opportunity in California.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah.

Chief David Jarvis: And did you ever get promoted

Raymond Van Heuklon: No.

Chief David Jarvis: No?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No. Well, I- I v- was uh.. we were starting to get them in there. And then- then they sent me up to the Point Conception station.

Chief David Jarvis: Okay.

Raymond Van Heuklon: And- which was inactive. When we- we only uh.. one day a- a week or something like that. And uh.. during the day, we'd- we'd just stand by on the- on the-- get- get line checks from the telephone. That was about all there was. But then when I went back to c- uh.. Point Conception, we had uh.. a d- probably a dozen staff sergeants. And- and I told 'em, I said-- they didn't know what to do. I says, "Give- give me a crew and I'll be the crew chief." Let the- the- the other guys had- had taken over on the maintenance. And so I just coasted as an operator, chief operator. And then when the warrant officer came out- up from Hollywood, he came up there. And we were-- we- we didn't need him. With the-- had to have a place to put him. And he had up on all this stuff. And he- he knew that I could get out at San Bernardino. So after five years, well I just figured that I could get out.
<chuckles>

Karen Burn: So after you got out of the service, when- when was the next time you would be back in Hawaii?

Raymond Van Heuklon: This week.

Karen Burn: This week. You haven't been back?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Six- sixty years.

Karen Burn: Sixty years.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah.

Chief David Jarvis: Welcome back.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. Thank you.

Karen Burn: So you didn't- you- you didn't come to the 50th then?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No.

Karen Burn: No.

Raymond Van Heuklon: No. My wife was still living yet, and uh.. she didn't care how far she traveled, as long she slept in her own bed at night.

Karen Burn: And what- what made you decide to come to the 60th reunion?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Well, I wanted to see what it was like.

Karen Burn: And between the time of- of the attack in 1941 and today, have- have you talked very much about your experiences at Pearl Harbor over the years?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Not too much. I kind of forgot about it, you know.

Karen Burn: Forgot about it.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Mm-hm.

Karen Burn: Did you feel like there was any interest in people hearing about your stories?

Raymond Van Heuklon: I don't know. I never thought about it. Maybe if someone had asked me-- <inaudible>. You know, where I was, or something like that. I just said South Pacific and- and drop it at that.

Karen Burn: So this is really one of the first times that you've- you've actually talked about what happened to you here.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah.

Karen Burn: And on December 7th, tomorrow, are you going out to the ceremonies?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No. That's probably invi- invitation only. That's members of the Ar-- the people who were on the Arizona. I- I- I called probably a month ago or so. And uh.. one of the rangers, Don something, 800

number. And he gave me the- the deal on it. And s- so then we waited until we got over here and took uh.. one of the excursions here.

Karen Burn: Oh, so you went out earlier in the week.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah.

Karen Burn: You went out to the memorial. And that was your first time to see it.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah, the memorial, yeah.

Karen Burn: Yes, mm-hm.

Raymond Van Heuklon: The last time I- I had the seen the Arizona was I walked on the keel of it.

Karen Burn: Oh. You were on it.

Raymond Van Heuklon: It had a gangplank, you could-- I don't know how it got so far out. But I would say with more than a 15 or 20 foot gangplank out there. I don't know if they- the water got higher, or what.

Karen Burn: What was it like to go out there?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Oh, it was kind of an odd feeling. And, you know, you know all these people that are under- underneath there, and to me, it look- just looks-- I couldn't see why they couldn't roll it over. The superstructure and everything was tangled up in the rock right there. Oklahoma, they slid that around in the mud, there was no problem at all. They just-- but- but just pumping air into it and one thing-- I don't know how they did it. But, anyway, this guy was on- on the rigging of that Oklahoma too. And they finished that one and they moved to the Arizona.

Karen Burn: Did you know anybody on the Arizona?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No.

Karen Burn: No.

Raymond Van Heuklon: I probably did, but I do- I don't remember.

Karen Burn: Don't remember. So when you were out there, did that bring back lots of memories of 1941?

Raymond Van Heuklon: <inaudible>

Chief David Jarvis: On December 7th, you saw just one plane over Schofield Barracks.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah.

Chief David Jarvis: And that was-- had--

Raymond Van Heuklon: The one that--

Chief David Jarvis: You saw that-- did you see that get shot down? Do you know who shot it?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No. I'm- I'm right in the middle. Because there was b- buildings and st- stuff in between. 19th Infantry had a baseball diamond and a football field in that direction.

Chief David Jarvis: You saw somebody on the roof firing a--

Raymond Van Heuklon: I didn't see him. They- they told me.

Chief David Jarvis: Okay.

Raymond Van Heuklon: That uh..

Chief David Jarvis: Do you know who that person would have been that shot?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No.

Chief David Jarvis: No?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Because we- we were all on a- uh.. alert status and waiting for orders to move out. See, the- that was- would be the uh.. 1st Battalion, A Company. And I was on K Company, kitty corner, it's across the barracks. You know how they're laid out? You've been up there? There's _____ quadrangles. He came at an angle across, and he just missed the corner of our barracks. He probably was up higher, but I'm below looking at it. And I-- all I know is, I was close enough to see the white of his eyes. <chuckles>

Chief David Jarvis: Yeah.

Karen Burn: Yeah.

Raymond Van Heuklon: That was kind of a weary feeling.

Chief David Jarvis: And after the attack, you were later a- assigned to that radar site.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah.

Chief David Jarvis: And you went there without any electronics training, is- is that correct

Raymond Van Heuklon: No, that's right. I didn't.

Chief David Jarvis: And you relived those people, some of those people--

Raymond Van Heuklon: The- the- the operators.

Chief David Jarvis: Who were at the-- they were gonna be sent back to the states?

Raymond Van Heuklon: No.

Chief David Jarvis: No.

Raymond Van Heuklon: They went back to the Hollywood headquarters, and then we'd be reassigned to some other station.

Chief David Jarvis: Because I thought some of them may have been, had to go back to the inquiry of the battle. And I was wondering if you relieved--

Raymond Van Heuklon: No. But Lockhart and Elliott would- would be the only ones that- that--

Chief David Jarvis: The only ones.

Raymond Van Heuklon: And they were sent back to the states. And now I don't know what happened to them.

Chief David Jarvis: Did they feel they did their job and that--

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah.

Chief David Jarvis: --correctly?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. They're still fighting. Because uh... one of the rangers said that they were both at the- uh... on the tour on the 50th they were there, and they were eating. They're- the guy that was at the- at that site where, you know, where they uh.. he said that they were still bickering on the 50th anniversary. <chuckles> Elliot was kind of a-- I don't know, hyper strung or something. He- he was throwing dat- uh.. darts at Lockhart's, got a icture, cut it out of the newspaper. And he- he had the darts and every once in a while he said-- he'd get mad and he'd start throwing darts at this.

Karen Burn: So they- so they can't agree on who spotted the Japanese plane.

Raymond Van Heuklon: That's right.

Karen Burn: Even to this day, or 50- or the 50th anniversary.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. I guess Lockhart got all the credit and Elliott won, needling him, called it in.

Chief David Jarvis: After you got out of the service, did you stay with electronics?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Uh.. There- there-- I was kinda ahead of the electronics. See, it was all military. But uh.. I got into heating and air conditioning and _____ electronic controls in that. So I'm- I was able to- to work it only in a diff- different area. Our Washington controls were all going uh.. electronic and u- using infrared uh.. sensors.

Chief David Jarvis: And the major that you were the chauffeur for, what was his name?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Uh.. Bodock.

Chief David Jarvis: Oh, Bodock. _____ you.

Raymond Van Heuklon: It's in the book here.

Karen Burn: Do you have anything else?

Chief David Jarvis: No.

Karen Burn: Is- is there- is there anything else that you want to add about your experiences here in December of 1941 that you didn't tell us before?

Raymond Van Heuklon: I don't know. I can't remember anything else.

Karen Burn: Or anything you want to tell us about being here now? Are you glad you came?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah, I am. Yeah, it's a real experience to be back here again. And one may wish I could have been in shape to drive a- around. Uh.. we rented a car, the- the second day we turned it in. We had so much trouble finding the hotel that night. Of course, it's dark and nothing is- is the same anymore. I used to come out in this area that I friends in _____, that's high- a little big higher up the mountain.

Chief David Jarvis: Right. I think there was only two hotels that were here when you were here and they're still on the strip.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah, that's right, yeah. The Ro- The Royal Hawaiian and uh.. I don't remember what the other one was. And the Navy, you guys had taken over the Royal Hawaiian. So.

Karen Burn: Do you want to-- and- and we'll film it up close a little later. But do you want to show us what you brought with you today? What did you bring?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Uh.. this is a regimental book that was uh.. every year-- they i- they issue it every year, the whole uh.. regimen, the 19th Infantry.

Karen Burn: Okay.

Raymond Van Heuklon: And that- that here in 19th is a- a old organization. They s- started in 1861. And they- they- they were instrumental in the Battle of the Rock of Chickamauga. So that- that was our theme, or whatever you'd call it.

Karen Burn: Okay.

Chief David Jarvis: Could you hold it up like this? Hold it up in front of you, and I want you to-- <inaudible>

Karen Burn: Okay. And what's the other thing you brought with you?

Raymond Van Heuklon: This was a _____ a Honolulu Star Bulletin.

Karen Burn: And can you turn that around? There we go. So did you purchase that in 1941?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah. When it came out, I bought one.

Karen Burn: And what are you planning to do with these things?

Raymond Van Heuklon: I'm thinking about giving them to the uh.. Rangers, Park Service.

Karen Burn: Donating them to the Arizona Memorial?

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah.

Karen Burn: All right.

Raymond Van Heuklon: So.

Chief David Jarvis: And you are featured in the--

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah, in- in- in this one.

Chief David Jarvis: In that one there.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Yeah.

Chief David Jarvis: Showing you what you looked-- or you in uniform back during the war.

Raymond Van Heuklon: I never can find it this way paging through it. Oh, no, that's--

Karen Burn: It's where that white piece of paper is.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Oh.

Karen Burn: There you go.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Here it is.

Chief David Jarvis: Which one are we looking at? We're looking--

Raymond Van Heuklon: Uh..

Karen Burn: <inaudible>

Raymond Van Heuklon: The back row, the second one.

Chief David Jarvis: <inaudible>

Karen Burn: All right. Well, we'd like to thank you very much for everything that you did in 1941, and for coming back out in 2001 and sharing your experiences with us. We appreciate that very much. Thank you.

Raymond Van Heuklon: Thank you. Thank you. Can I put my decorations back on now?

End of Tape 407 Raymond Van Heuklon